

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6350

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 0631

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EGEN, HA

SUBJECT: SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF JEAN- CLAUDE
DUVALIER'S PRESIDENCY

1. SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF PRESIDENCY OF JEAN- CLAUDE
DUVALIER COMMEMORATED IN HAITI APRIL 22 WITH SPECIAL
MASS IN PORT AU PRINCE CATHEDRAL, ATTENDED BY ALL
GOVERNMENT LEADERS, DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND OTHER DIG-
NITARIES, FOLLOWED BY PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS FORMALLY
INAUGURATING REGULAR ANNUAL SESSION OF HAITI'S
LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER.

2. DUVALIER'S SPEECH TO THE LEGISLATURE, AS MOST
OF HIS SPEECHES HAVE BEEN, WAS LARGELY ECONOMIC IN
CONTENT. TOURISM, HE REPORTED, INCREASED FROM
84,000 VISITORS IN 1971 TO 108,000 IN 1972; GOVERN-
MENT REVENUES WERE UP 12 PERCENT IN THE PAST YEAR; GOVERNMENT
EMPLOYEES WERE BEING PAID REGULARLY AND ON TIME,
AND MANUFACTURING WAS UP SHARPLY. ON THE OTHER HAND,
DUVALIER ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT AGRICULTURAL PRO-
DUCTION HAD SUFFERED (DUE TO ADVERSE WEATHER AND
COLLAPSE OF A KEY IRRIGATION DAM LAST FALL,
HE CLAIMED) LEADING TO NEED FOR GOVERNMENT TO
IMPORT RICE AND OTHER BASIC FOODSTUFFS. DUVALIER
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ASSERTED THAT HAITI'S FOOD " CRISIS", HOWEVER, WOULD
BE OVER BY THE END OF THIS COMING JUNE. HE ALSO
ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HAITI WAS SUFFERING IN GENERAL FROM

SHARPLY RISING PRICES (WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED TO WORLD ECONOMIC CONCITIONS AND FAILURE OF LOCAL PRODUCTION AND MARKETING TO KEEP PACE WITH RISING DEMAND), BUT HE DECLARED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT' S " RAPID, MEASURED, AND DETERMINED" PRICE CONTROL MEASURES HAD HALTED PRICE SPIRAL.

3. SPECULATION WAS COMMON IN HAITI BEFORE APRIL 22 THAT REGIME MIGHT TAKE OCCASION TO MAKE SOME POLITICAL ANNOUNCEMENT OR CHANGE, SUCH AS A CABINET SHUFFLE OR FORMALLY BESTOWING TITLE OF VICE PRESIDENT ON MADAME SIMONE O. DUVALIER, THE PRESIDENT' S MOTHER. HOWEVER, THE PRESIDENT' S APRIL 22 SPEECH CONTAINED NOTHING OF POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. ONLY POLITICAL INITIATIVE OF PAST WEEKEND WAS A GRANT OF EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY TO THREE LOCAL MERCHANTS CONVICTED OF BLACK- MARKETEERING APRIL 2. IN HIS PUBLIC APPEARANCES CONNECTED WITH THE COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS JEAN- CLAUDE DUVALIER SEEMED IN NORMAL GOOD HEALTH, AND WAS SURROUNDED BY THE USUAL RETINUE OF MINISTERS, AIDES, AND MILITARY OFFICERS, WITHOUT ANY CHANGE IN THE PECKING ORDER AS WE HAVE OBSERVED IT IN RECENT MONTHS.

4. SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF FRANCOIS DUVALIER WAS ALSO COMMEMORATED WITH MEMORIAL MASSES AND OTHER OBSERVANCES, BUT PUBLISHED EULOGIES THIS YEAR SEEMED NOTABLY FEWER THAN LAST. IN GENERAL, SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE PASSING OF THE DUVALIER INHERITANCE IN HAITI PASSED QUIETLY AND UNEVENTFULLY.

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